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**NETWORKING PROJECT – CREATING BONDS  
BETWEEN CENTRIA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED  
SCIENCES AND LOCAL HIGH SCHOOLS**

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## ABSTRACT

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<p>Networking is essential, it does not matter what the branch. It is equally important in both personal and professional aspects of life. This thesis work describes the starting point of a continuous process, which is creating bonds by Industrial Managements students from Centria University of Applied Sciences. Through implementing internationalization project foreigners grouped with young Finns and promoted university. The venture included two local high schools. Close cooperation with Rahkolan koulu from Ylivieska and Merenojan koulu from Kalajoki sketched a link, which should be cherished.</p>		

<b>Key words</b> Centria University of Applied Sciences, Industrial Management, internationalization, Merenojan koulu, networking, Rahkolan koulu, project.
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis work will give you an idea about the networking project, which was conducted by Centria University of Applied Sciences students in the autumn of 2015. Based on close cooperation with local high schools, this was supposed to result in extending the bonds and establishing new set of links. Foreign students met young Finns, discussed about their lives in international environment, shared viewpoints. But that was only the beginning. Once started, the venture turns into constant process, which is cultivated and cherished by tutors of Industrial Management degree program from Ylivieska. It assures durability of the bond and satisfaction of parties involved.

The paper is supported by theoretical background, which is base for the entire process. To understand complexity of the venture one must be familiar with concept of networking, project itself as well as internationalization. These three combined are roots for our objectives, which are creating strong and fruitful networks, erasing visible line between Finnish and foreign students and grouping. When going through theoretical aspects of the thesis you will realize its importance and great impact on the venture as a whole.

The matter of research is not only holding the project and beginning of networking process, but also the creation of the model for international meetings. Such sketch should be adopted in upcoming years by Centria tutors, when carrying about the links. It can be used as a support, when planning sessions, presentations and different events for high school students.

## **2 NETWORKING**

The Earth is not as big as it seemed to be a century ago. Anyone seems to be easily accessible, with using only minimum of time and effort. People around the world have used the opportunity and created multiple bonds, which they cherish. The planet has shrunk. (Karinthy 1929, 1)

The phenomena of 'six degrees of separation' stands for everyone to be somehow linked to every other person on the planet. Through various experiments and calculations theorists and scientists have developed the idea of simple bond between any two humans. Such relation is supposed to be based on maximum six celled chain. The concept shows how little we need to actually connect with the right people (Yeung 2009, 15)

Networking is essential, it doesn't matter what the branch is. To find people, who are interested in purchasing particular services or products, one must have contacts. These do not have to be important businessmen or politicians. Apparently, we may know someone, who knows someone, who we would actually like to work with, but we do not know it yet. (Yeung 2009, 7)

### **2.1 The term of networking**

The idea of networking is the creation of a fruitful relationships for all parties included. Through conscious transfer of resources and information, people gain trust and establish strong bonds. The result of such process is personal and professional development. (Barber & Waymon 2002, 19)

Every single network is a complex kit of important connections from inside as well as outside the company. On these depend the success of the organizations involved. Within the networks people collaborate, solve issues, and even get into conflicts. Through these actions we do not only extend the bonds, but also gain precious experience. (Grayson & Baldwin 2007, 7)

It is important to highlight, that networking is a long-term process. Management cannot judge whether the relation is fruitful and promising couple of weeks after implementation of such. The process may last months or even years, depending on the case. (Barber & Waymon 2002, 20)

## **2.2 Importance of networking**

In business life the actual knowledge seems to be less important than the relation with particular people. A single connection is an opened door to numerous opportunities for both personal and professional improvement. (WetFeet 2003, 6)

We can distinguish five basic advantages of networking.

Firstly, the job security. Contacts, relationships and the knowledge that belongs to one particular employee, are nonrenewable resources. Such valuable people do not get fired, when it comes to cutting off the staff. Moreover, the person who has a strong network is considered as great team player, which is a huge advantage in working life. Employers are afraid to lose so precious workers. (WetFeet 2003, 6)

Secondly, better opportunities. People talk. Knowing right people and being a good listener gives a possibility to hear something incredibly interesting. For instance, friend of a friend is looking for someone to run the project in our field. The

conditions are nice, so is the team and remuneration. That is a chance one could miss, without having a proper network. (WetFeet 2003, 7)

Thirdly, strong networks are stress reducers. It has been scientifically proven that people, who stay in positive and close relationships with the environment tend to be more relaxed. It affects not only business, but private life too. Being surrounded by friends, a sense of support and simply someone to talk to about every day's problems are lowering tension. (WetFeet 2003, 8)

The next positive aspect is the reinforcement. When trying to climb high on the success ladder, one cannot make it on his own. Challenges are not only easier to complete, but to take on, when knowing there is great backup behind us. Mentoring, coaching and helpful hand are desired by every human being in tough moments. (WetFeet 2003, 8)

Last but not least, the stiff competition. People around the world are using networking in their business life and it works out pretty well for them. To stay in the game and to be competitive, one must use the contacts and extend bonds. (WetFeet 2003, 8-9.)

### **2.3 Developing the network**

Creating a proper network demands a lot of time and effort. However, the patience pays off. (Grayson & Baldwin 2007, 25)

Learning from other people is critical, when trying to establish the network. Not everyone has to be a master in this field. Admitting lack of professional experience in matter of forming bonds is one step towards success. Listening, watching and



trying to adopt the tactics in own environment are best possible practices. (Grayson & Baldwin 2007, 25)

There is no way to extend contact lists without talking to people. Inviting for lunch or simple chit chat are fair enough to gain the knowledge. Discussion can be related to private as well as working life. Asking for opinion about the project is very valuable, as it gives the idea from different angle. The relation which have started from talking about children in the corridor may turn into great friendship or business partnership next year. (Grayson & Baldwin 2007, 25)

Inviting yourself is another way of broadening horizons. Attending another group's sessions, joining different clubs or committees are extending range of networks. Additionally, these work well for personal development. (Grayson & Baldwin 2007, 26)

Receiving feedback should be always treated as positive and constructive matter, even when it criticizes the project. Asking for opinions and ideas not only tightens the bonds, but also shows what was invisible before. The fresh look of a stranger may be more valuable than own assumptions. (Grayson & Baldwin 2007, 26)

To work with people from outside of every day's environment means to gain connections. Volunteering for projects is an outstanding opportunity to meet people from different departments and get to know what and how they do. By working together we can observe their strengths, weaknesses and skills. (Grayson & Baldwin 2007, 27)

Through being direct one lets others know what he does, importance of the function and what they may gain by building a relation. It is sort of self-promotion of a person as good source of information about processes, resources and people.

Making society interested about our character makes them wish to get to know us better. In this way people find us, not the opposite. (Grayson & Baldwin 2007, 27)

## **2.4 Six degrees of separation**

The theory claims for any two people, no matter how various groups they come from, to be connected by more or less five acquaintances. Introduced by Frigyes Karinthy in 1929 was an answer for technological development and increase in easily accessible communication channels. It was a moment, when any long-distance relation seemed to be possible and the world made an impression of shrinking. Back then, he used the following wording: Planet Earth has never been as tiny as it is now. (Karinthy 1929, 1)

Together with a group of his friends, Frigyes was playing some sort of game. They have been trying to find a link to any well-known person as well as total stranger. Apparently, due to their extended networks and abilities of quick analysis, the gentlemen have found the bonds in each case. They did not need to use more than five elements in the chain. (Karinthy 1929, 2-3)

Later on, the concept was supported by an actual examination. The research was committed in 1961 by group of scientists from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. To make the whole project reliable, the team chose strictly mathematical approach. They have asked various ladies and gentlemen to keep track of all names of people they met within hundred days. As a result, the average answer stood for five hundred. (Milgram 1967, 63)

Thinking of every person knowing about five hundred people they have made couple of assumptions, which resulted in as little as one in two hundred thousand

chance that any two people know each other. However, when taking into consideration involvement of only two acquaintances the odds drop rapidly. Based on the theory and calculations, there is fifty-fifty chance that two random people are linked by a simple chain, which includes only two additional cells. (Milgram 1967, 63)

The last and most impressive experiment related to the theory was committed by Stanley Milgram in 1967. He knew personally a group from Massachusetts and wanted to polish the concept. (Milgram 1967, 63)

Firstly, the researcher have obtained a specimen of people representing both genders and various life stages. Volunteers have received an envelope, which contained personal data of target, set of few simple rules of experiment and a list on which each of the volunteers should write his or her name. A roster was used by examiners to keep the track of the study and for receiver to know exactly from whom he got it. (Milgram 1967, 64)

The basic concept was for people to reach the mentioned character, by using their networks. Of course, they could have passed the envelop directly to him, but only if they knew him personally. If no, participants were supposed to figure out who of the people they know would possibly be able to get to the target. The most important rule to follow was to send documentation to only one person. In this way each chain could have been easily maintained. (Milgram 1967, 64)

As study was concluded in United States of America, all experiments were closed within its borders. The test was done twice. First starting point was Wichita in Kansas and second Omaha, Nebraska. In both cases, people were supposed to reach the same target located in Boston.(Milgram 1967, 64)

It took only four days for the first envelope to travel from the starting point in Kansas to the target. Surprisingly, the number of intermediate people included in the chain was only two. After analysis of the whole study it turns out, that forty-four lines which were successful and started in Nebraska included between one and eleven cells. Average number was six. Unfortunately, most of chains have broken on the way and never got to ending point. (Milgram 1967, 64)

### **3 PROJECT**

Any task that has been started and finished can be called a project. In professional life, the venture is much more complex. It is driven by particular purposes in order to achieve desired objectives. A project is taken to improve an exact matter inside or outside the organization. (Forsberg 2005, 5)

#### **3.1 Project definition**

A project is a temporary process, which is initiated because of a problem solving need or development. It is an effort taken in order to achieve specific goals. The venture involves many different resources, such as knowledge, networks, money, people and material. All of these, maintained in innovative manner, lead to constructive change. (Koster 2009, 3)

The outcome of a project is a unique product, service or a result. Which is then utilized depending on its purpose. The output may be sent directly to the customer after finalizing the venture, or used inside the organization. (Project Management Institute, Inc. 2004, 5)

### **3.2 Project characteristics**

We can distinguish three basic features of a project, no matter the field and type. These are just universal ones that describe the core and idea of the project itself. (Koster 2009, 3)

As it stands in the definition, a project is not continuous, but a temporary process. Even though the time scope may reach up to a few years, it still has some limitations. The activity must have specified schedule for its beginning and the end. The timing is not only strict and specified matter. Same goes for financial and human resources and the outcome of the process. (Koster 2009, 3)

Each and every venture is unique, although all basics of all can be described with same adjectives. Variety of objectives, lack of routine and the context are what make the project special. Organizations are different and even if by some chance few would take up similar activities, the process itself and the outcome will not be same at all. (Koster 2009, 4)

Projects are risky. Unconventional activities tend to involve uncertainty, which is the root of the danger in this matter. A project, as a complex process, is susceptible to fail if one of chain elements suddenly breaks. That is why proper project plans include risk analysis. When all possible hazards are named it is easier to plan how to prevent such and, after they occurred, how to deal with them. (Koster 2009, 5)

### **3.3 Types of projects**

The very basic concept categorizes projects into three different groups. Each of them is driven by different purposes and desired outcomes. (Richman 2002, 61)

A market-driven project is an answer for actual and potential customers' demand. It includes the introduction of innovative products or services. Satisfying the need will possibly bring increase in market share. (Richman 2002, 61)

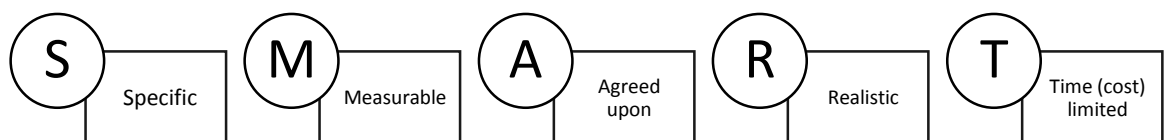
A quick fix to a specific issue is called crisis-driven project. Unlikely the first one, this is reactive type. When a problem occurs, quick action is implemented in order to keep the organization in a good place in the market. (Richman 2002, 61)

The last group is for change-driven ventures. Whenever a company is in need of refreshment, caused by drop in effectiveness or need to fit in newest trends the management should come up with such project. (Richman 2002, 61)

### 3.5 Setting the objectives

Once an organization has clarified the issue which is supposed to be solved through the project, the following steps set the goals. When fixing the objectives one must consider its three most important aspects; cost, by meaning of tangible and intangible resources, time needed to finish each of project's steps and the scope, which describe the features and range of desired outcome. (Richman 2002, 62)

The project manager, when working on the objectives, should remember that each and every goal must fit the concept of SMART. (see graph below)



GRAPH 1. SMART concept (adapted from Richman 2002, 62-64)

Specific stands for transparency of the objective. It must be so clear, that anyone from the branch as well as outside of it would understand the meaning. Defined goal describes exactly what sort of processes are included in the project. (Richman 2002, 62)

Measurable objectives are simple to report. The progress is visible only when it can be shown in actual numbers. Lack of measures gives the venture chaotic manner and lack of clarity. (Richman 2002, 62)

All parties involved in the project must agree upon its purpose before it starts running. Especially important is to discuss the matter of the end result, such as how the knowledge gained will be utilized, the way of solving problems through the project or developing new product in order to meet customer's demand. (Richman 2002, 63)

Realism in matter of project's objectives means the actual possibilities used in the process. Organization have some limitations and must remember it, when planning the budgeting, human resources, skills and time. Unrealistic goals can make the project impossible to succeed. (Richman 2002, 63)

Time frame is to be scheduled before the process starts. So are the costs of the venture. Implementation of such lets management to prevent eventual risks, such as missing the deadline or running out of financial resources in the middle of process. (Richman 2002, 64)



### 3.6 Project management

Project management leads the ventures in such manner, that it becomes a critical value for the organization. Every project has its life cycle, which is difficult to determine, as it is a matter of an individual case. It depends on many internal as well as external factors. However, we can distinguish its four phases. (Koster 2009, 5)

Firstly, the initiating. This is the start point for every project. It is the moment, when the management have had discovered the problem or need and decides to deal with it. Once the projects in form of drafts and plans have been proposed, the management must choose which would be the best for the company. It gives clear view for resources needed and possible risks, which may arise during the action. Collected propositions ease the decision making process. (Koster 2009, 64)

Secondly, the planning. This phase is about determining what should and should not be done in order to achieve project's objectives. The outcome of such invention is a proper plan that includes financial and human resources as well as risk analysis. (Koster 2009, 5)

The next phase is performance and controlling. As it includes the implementation and actual running of the project, this point is the longest one. Every manager, it doesn't matter what business field and department, is in charge of control. So are the project managers. The progress must be monitored, so that the gaps can be spotted and eliminated. Also, it allows qualitative measure of an output. (Koster 2009, 190)

The last, fourth phase, is completion. Here, the project manager is supposed to present the final report, so an organization can learn a lesson. Such statement should

confirm that the management did their best to carry the project in effective and efficient manner. Termination of venture means also passing the outcome to the end customer. Depending on the case, it can be service or product delivered to the customer or a result in form of improvement for a company itself. (Koster. 2009. 5)

## **4 INTERNATIONALIZATION**

In the 1980's, experts had observed growing interest in international cooperation between companies. The world had seemingly shrunk and organizations were looking for opportunities abroad. Entering the global environment and creating fruitful links was driven by will of becoming more competitive. (Welch & Luostarinen 1999, 83)

As for today, students who are aware of market's demand decide to study abroad. Between 2000 and 2010 the number of people attending to university in country different than their origin have doubled. The phenomena seems to be never-ending, as it continues. (Henard, Diamond & Roseveare 2012, 7)

### **4.1 Definition**

Internationalization is continuous process, not a temporary action. An ongoing effort that is taken in order to integrate an international, intercultural or global aspect. It refers to extension of bonds between nations, cultures or countries, as well as communities and institutions. (Knight. 2015, 2)

It is the specific movement of a particular organization. Acts towards creating modified and developed company, using people speaking different languages and coming from various countries as resources. (Green & Olson 2003, 2)

## 4.2 Importance of internationalization

Today's working life requires graduates to have international experience. That is no surprise, since big companies are operating on a global scale. Subsidiaries abroad, foreign business partners or investors and simply staying competitive are most common reasons behind creating multicultural environment at work. Employees seek for educated professionals with solid practical background. Excellence in foreign language is not enough. They expect applicants to be skilled in intercultural matters, be familiar with working in multinational teams and face all its challenges. (Henard, Diamond & Roseveare 2012, 7)

An international approach in the educational stage increases the possibility of a young person's successful career. Without proper international background one may have difficulties of getting the dream job, even though he is well-qualified in the specific field. Schools are prepared for that and already have introduced set of programs and teaching methods. Especially higher education institutes tend to send their students to study as well as practical exchanges. They cooperate with foreign institutions to extend the networks and present greater options for students. (Henard, Diamond & Roseveare 2012, 7)

The strategy also changes the organization itself. Multicultural society brings various view points for same matter. By implementing internationalization, the company meets alternative solutions for arising issues and multiple ways of thinking about a single case. Such factors drive open mindedness and active discussion, which are valued by global companies, especially when thinking of team work skills. (Henard, Diamond & Roseveare 2012, 8)

Integrating the process supports economic growth of the country. Foreign cooperation may benefit in investments and innovative technologies. It is great

support for the development of particular sectors and economy in general. Exchange of knowledge and resources in this matter does not involve only companies anymore, but the countries themselves. Introduction of clear internationalizing strategy will create not only strong bond between parties involved, but also the governments. (Henard, Diamond & Roseveare 2012, 11)

### **4.3 Internationalization approach**

When forming the internationalization strategy, the management board should firstly define the objective of such. By setting the goals they also clarify a path, an overall approach which is followed until desired outcome has been reached. The approaches do not exclude each other. They simply deal with different aspects of an internationalization and use various methods in the process. We can distinguish four of such. (Knight & de Wit 1995, 16)

An activity approach is the most commonly used one, when talking of internationalization as a process. As the name suggests, it describes categories or types of activities which must be taken in order to succeed. Such strategy can therefore include various projects, exchanges and joint research programs. However, it does not stand for any organizational issues to be developed. Approach sets up actions, not changes. (Knight & de Wit 1995, 16)

A different idea is presented by the competency approach. Here we can observe focus forced on attitudes, skill improvement and knowledge of people involved. The success of internationalization as a process can be easily measured by checking the development of a unit. An increase in qualifications gained through training would be a testimony of victory. (Knight & de Wit 1995, 16)

Ethos approach stands for cultural evolution in a particular environment. Developed manner would be supporting intercultural and international initiatives inside of an organization. Values presented by ethos cherish multiculturalism and perspectives for improvement. (Knight & de Wit 1995, 17)

The last, process approach, is directly connected to the idea of ethos, as it cultivates the integration movement too. Also, it is the most comprehensive one among others. It includes a great range of different activities as well as an actual change in organizational policies and routines. It demands general changes, rebuilding the institution and its basic values. The process adopts internationalization as major function of entire body. In this case, the international dimension is upgraded into essential value and core of the curriculum. (Knight & de Wit 1995, 17)

## **5 PROJECT PLAN**

The project is held in order to create a strong bond between Centria University of Applied Sciences, especially Industrial Management degree program, and local high schools. A group of people representing this faculty is supposed to visit schools and present life of international folks in Ylivieska. Through meeting with younger students and talking about themselves, they spread the awareness about foreigners in the area. The story of each of our representative not only interests youth, but also promotes the University.

It is known, that despite the numerous attempts in grouping international students with Finnish society; different projects and events, activities organized at the University and Youth House, the line between these two groups still exists.

The model of such international meeting is an outcome of the project. Once started this autumn, it will run continuously. In upcoming years tutor students will use this clear description, when preparing to visit high schools. We believe, that annual meetings with Finnish youngsters will help in erasing the existing line.

### **5.1 Objectives**

The main objective of the project mentioned above is networking. It is important for education organizations to have strong, local partners. Keeping positive relations between the only university in the city and high schools around is critical, when thinking of students' flow. Teachers must provide young people an opportunity to get to know the possibilities of the future. Such bond should be created through continuous process of supporting each other's needs.

High schools are suitable grounds for promotion. Young Finns will soon have to make decisions about their next step in education. Depending on marketing and availability of information, they will or will not choose our school. The more they know about Centria University of Applied Sciences, the more they are interested and wish to study here. Annual visit in high schools, talking to youngsters and encouraging them to join the Industrial Management crew would surely increase the number of applicants.

The next one is internationalization. It is noticeable, that young Finns have a problem with speaking English. Even though they are able to communicate very well, there is some barrier difficult to beat. Giving them the possibility to talk and listen to foreigners, when English is the only common language, may help. Also, they will realize that international students are also making some grammar mistakes. Although all the lectures are kept in English, none of us is a native speaker and our language skills are not perfect. This may give them courage to speak, what is very important. Today's market demands from people to be fluent in English and able to work in an international team. Such opportunity is a good base for development of intercultural communication skills.

## **5.2 Responsibility**

Monika Musielak, third year student of Industrial Management in Centria University of Applied Sciences, Ylivieska unit, is in charge of the project. It is her responsibility to gather the team, meet the authorities of high schools beforehand, prepare presentations, manage the events and analyze results.

Supported by working-life supervisor Virve Antinoja and thesis supervisor Marja-Liisa Kaakko, Monika should handle the project in the best manner.



### 5.3 The team

The group of students participating in the project is very varied. They all come from different countries and present various cultures. What they have in common is the will to gather international experience and develop skills using the possibilities given by Centria University of Applied Sciences. The team consists of three students, four when counting the project manager.

Xiaohan Zhou has worked out her thesis, regarding problems of the food industry in her homeland, China. She is about to graduate in the upcoming spring. As her basic training she choose to be a waitress in Las Chapas Hotel in Marbella, Spain. Also, she has been working in the same position in Savon Mafia Oy in Savonlinna. There Xiaohan experienced the Finnish working environment, which she refers as cozy and pleasant. Finally, her professional internship was completed in Hrabín, China, in Yongjia Real Estate Development Co. Ltd as a Sales Director. She learned a lot about customer service and trade. Xiaohan was accepted for Overseas Exchange Program and went to study in Lock Haven University in Pennsylvania in the United States of America. During the four months period spent in USA, she learned about politics, communication and writing skills and statistical mathematics.

Adrien Biencourt, a French student planning to graduate at the end of this academic year. Firstly, he was studying Mechanical and Production Engineering in his homeland. There, for his final exam, Adrien had to complete a project, which he chose to do at Centria. When finishing his work regarding Biomass gasifiers, he decided to stay at our University as an Industrial Management student. Adrien had completed training in Greece twice, managing stock and serving customers of a beach club. During his second year of studies, he took a part in the China Program guided by our University. He was one of the first foreign students of Centria, who

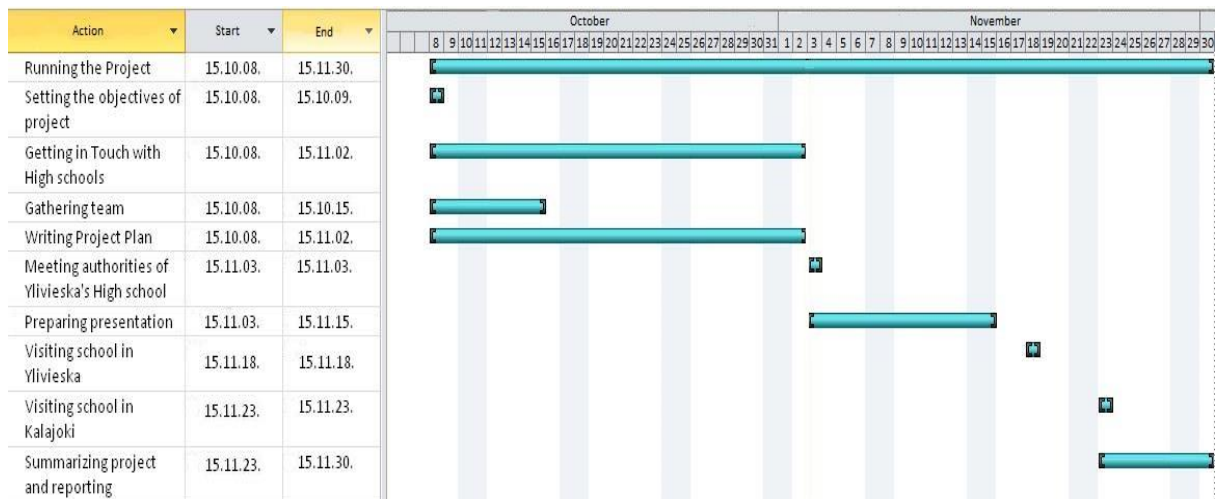
applied for studying in Shanghai as an exchange student. Currently he is looking for career opportunities around Europe, focusing mainly on the Finnish market.

Mate Kocsis is Hungarian and is preparing for the maturity exam at the moment. His first training was done in Las Chapas Hotel in Spain, at position of Supply Officer.. Mate had to take care of stock, deliveries between departments and organize the invoices. He also learned about Spanish business culture. On his second year at the university he completed a professional training at Ochanomizu University in Tokyo. Mate was the first student from our school sent to a Japanese University. His task was to develop and design an Android application called Family Information Sharing System. Together with his laboratory colleagues, they worked on a program which would alert relatives about earthquakes threatening the phone owner. Finally, he worked in a café as barista in Scotland for couple of months as his last, basic internship.

To conclude, the team consisted of dynamic young people, who have faced many challenges while studying at Centria University of Applied Sciences. They have visited different countries around the world as exchange students or trainees, to gain experience needed in international companies. These are hardworking, active and intelligent members of the academic society.

## **5.4 Timing**

The picture presented below shows exact time needed to complete each step of the project. The starting point is 8<sup>th</sup> of October 2015, when the objectives were set. The end is planned after nearly two months, 30<sup>th</sup> of November 2015, then the report of the project shall be returned to supervisors.



PICTURE 1. Time schedule of the project

## 5.5 Resources

The most important resource used in the project is knowledge and current networks. Using the contacts and data known so far, we can develop the connections and extend the range of cooperation. To contact authorities from local high schools and set the meetings dates we use existing channels.

When preparing the presentations, students will use the ones available at the university and modify them. These will be the base for speaking about the Industrial Management degree program in Ylivieska and Centria University of Applied Sciences itself. The international team will add their own stories to slide show, to support their speeches about living in Finland from the perspective of a foreigner, studies abroad and professional experience gained during their time here. The Power Point presentation also includes two short grouping games.

One of the schools taking part in the project is located in Kalajoki, over thirty kilometers away from Ylivieska. In order to get there and back, students will use car borrowed from the university.

Moreover, the project needs promotion gadgets in order to gain student's interest. Some of them would be available for all the student, and some only for ones who joined the quiz or game.

### 5.6 Synopsis of an international meeting

Place: classroom given by high school's authorities.

Time: two lecture hours.

Audience: third year students and teachers.

Needed: PowerPoint presentations, projector, computer, gadgets.

Table 1 below presents the synopsis of meeting with students. We can read from it exact time needed for particular action, its goal and person in charge.

TABLE 1. Synopsis – time frame of the event

Action	Time	Objectives	Responsible
Introduction	5 min	Earning audience's interest	Monika
„Life of foreigner in Finland' presentation	20 min	Spreading awareness about international students in Ylivieska	All team members
„Break your tongue' game	10 min	Short pause; loosening atmosphere and getting student's attention	Monika
„Centria's share in my career, experience, skills and international education'	20 min	Highlighting importance of proper internship in working life, engraft the idea of training abroad in students' minds	All team members
„Where is it?' game	10 min	Short pause; loosening atmosphere and getting student's attention	All team members
„Industrial Management- what are we doing?'	20 min	Promotion of degree program, encouraging Finns to apply for English engineering studies	Monika
Summary	5 min	Reminding essential of the meeting, highlighting the end	Monika

Detailed description of each step:

„Life of foreigner in Finland“ - international students presenting their life since making decision about studying in Centria University of Applied Sciences. The group should speak about critical factors when choosing Finland, cultural differences between homeland and Ylivieska, how do they find among Finns and Industrial Management students. Also, students can share personal interest and the way of spending free time.

„Break your tongue“ – short game implemented in order to not let audience get bored. Few Finnish high schoolers will be chosen to join the game. International students will prepare beforehand short sentences in their mother language. Finns will be asked to read it out loud and try to guess the meaning. Foreign students will also present their Finnish skills.

„Centria’s share in my career, experience, skills and international education“ – team members present their internships and studying programs abroad and what they have gained thanks to exchange opportunities.

„Where is it?“ – slide show with pictures made by our students, when visiting different countries around the world during their studies. Again, couple of people will be taken from crowd to participate in the game. Task for Finns is to recognize these places.

„Industrial Management- what are we doing?“ – practical information about the degree program. The idea is to show both; management and engineering side of the faculty. Also, the overall data about places available, application period and the selection.

### 5.7 Risk analysis

The Table 2 below shows possible risks, which may arise when running the project. Thanks to such examination the team is aware of eventual dangers and can easily prevent them.

TABLE 2. Risk analysis of the project

Risk	Probability	Prevention
Failure of team members	Medium	Proper selection of students participating in the project. Undisturbed information flow, maintenance of moods within team, clarity in communication. Rewarding system. Quick replacement.
Lack of students' interest	Medium	Keeping the presentation simple and in unofficial manner. Interaction between international team and Finnish students. Avoiding using scientific terms. Gaming-pauses between presentations, forcing youth to join the show. Attractive gadgets.
Language barrier as problem with understanding the agenda of meeting	Low	Discussion with teachers, ensuring that students participating in project are able to handle conversations in English
Car ride to Kalajoki	Low	Selecting good driver. Booking the car in advance. Ensuring its blameless condition. Safe drive, according to traffic rules.

## **6 PROJECT REPORT**

The project was held in cooperation with two high schools, as was planned. The Rahkolan koulu case in Ylivieska included three different teachers, with leadership of Kirsi Jarvenpaa. Meeting in Merenojan koulu in Kalajoki was organized by Magda Lintou and William O’Gorman, the international studies lecturers.

The length of the project in matter of time had to be extended. It was caused by increased interest among teachers and will to cooperate. Also, apart from the basic meeting included in project, the team joined one additional lectures in order to support European Union themed lessons. The number of planned meetings with high school students was two; one in Ylivieska and one in Kalajoki. In fact, there were four events.

General feedback, visible enthusiasm and promise of staying in touch are proof, that project was successful and created fruitful bonds.

### **6.1 Additional meetings**

At the very beginning, when meetings were scheduled, the teacher from Rahkolan koulu in Ylivieska had asked if the students can join one of her courses as a support for the lecture. To extend range of project and make sure networking is going on well the idea was taken with an enthusiasm. Three students from Centria University of Applied Sciences were an example of different EU country members. Team consisted of Dutch, Polish and Hungarian. They were asked to form groups with students and together work out presentations about their countries in European

Union. The teams communicated in English, discussing refugee crisis, economic situation in particular regions as well as basic information about being EU member from perspective of our students. Thanks to the meeting, high schoolers got an opportunity to gain knowledge from the source, share ideas and discuss current issues in Europe.

Other teachers from very same school have heard about the project from Kirsi Jarvenpaa and wanted our team to visit their lectures too. Two language teachers connected their lessons, so that our team would present the show to greater audience. It was very valuable, as part of group consisted of French-speakers. They got possibility to talk to a native Frenchman, who was one of our team members. The other part was English-speaking students. As the entire presentation was given in English, they could listen to different accents of the very same language, catch some unknown vocabulary and simply get used to English as way to communicate with foreigners.

These extra events confirm that the goal of project has been achieved. The network is working very well and is beneficial for both parties.

## **6.2 Feedback**

At the end of project high school lecturers involved in events were asked to evaluate the meetings (APPENDIX 1). Surprisingly, the feedback was very positive. All three teachers, who were asked about opinion, agreed that the team did good job. They mentioned professional manner of the performance, friendly attitude towards audience and clarity of presentation as important features of our event, which were handled very well. The teachers also found the general structure of presentation favorable. The flow and chronological order were visible, which made the speeches well organized and understandable. Two little breaks filled with games were



described as refreshing and nice for students, who have problems with staying focused for as long as two lecture hours.

The only problem, which was noticed by a teacher from Kalajoki was the lack of high schoolers' interest, when the team spoke about the university and details of studies (APPENDIX 1). It is understandable, as most of students from audience were not sure yet about their future career and they did not really care about Centria's offer. These are young people, and informative part of the meeting did not speak to them. Unfortunately, we could not overcome this part. Promotion and encouraging youngsters to join the Industrial Management degree program were part of the objectives. Perhaps it could have been presented in more interesting way, so that the audience would not get bored.

### **6.3 Problems**

Couple of issues have occurred when handling the project. Some were a surprise and some were predicted in risk analysis. However, none of them was significant and did not affect final outcome.

Students involved in the project have quite tight schedule. Unfortunately, due to overload and finalizing thesis, one of our team members had to skip Kalajoki visit and join her lectures. Xiaohan had realized this overlap early enough, so it was not difficult to replace her. For this one day Jifan Xu, her countryman known for being an active student, especially in meaning of international projects, accompanied us. He did a great job, even though he did not have much time to prepare. Jifan's speech was handled in most professional manner. Also, he was able to handle interaction with youngsters with ease and positive attitude.

Regarding tight schedule, our team was not able to satisfy the demand in Rahkolan koulu. We have been asked to join one more lesson, but because of exams and lectures held the very same day we could not make it.

At the last meeting, when we visited joined language groups we were not really able to catch the attention of students. Part of them entered classroom with bored faces and preferred to use mobile phones or chitchat instead of listen to us. Teachers tried to intervene, but they did not succeed either. All we could do was to focus on this part of the group, which was curious about our presentation and try to encourage others to join the gaming part.

#### **6.4 Reaching the target**

The bonds have been established. It is noticeable especially when thinking of additional meetings, where Centria students have joined the lectures as support. They formed groups and discussed with young Finns the matter of European Union in particular countries. The teacher from Rahkolan koulu trusted that our team would suit the lesson and did not regret her choice. The classes were not only more colorful, but also brought great value, as students could learn from real examples, not just books or Internet.

Lecturers from local high schools are now aware of the fact, that Industrial Management students are willing to talk about their cultures and are happy to be a support for lessons or different events. These can be, for instance, international days in general, visits of native speakers at language lectures, discussing phenomena of cultural differences. The Industrial Management group is a very colorful and multicultural group, their experience and knowledge can be utilized in many ways, what was noticed by the lecturers. All of the teachers we spoke with have shown

will of continuous cooperation. We expect Centria students to join many different happenings in schools around the area.

The project was a successful base for networks creation. Held in great manner opened opportunities for foreign and Finnish students to integrate, learn from each other and gain experience needed in future career. Now it lies in responsibility of tutors to care about our partners, extend number of contacts and keep the performance at a high standard.

## **7 THE MODEL**

One of project's objectives was to set the model, which is supposed to be copied by tutors and introduced annually, according to the needs of local high schools. Such process assures quality and durability of link between parties.

### **7.1 Plan for future**

Once created, the bond shall be cherished. Starting with the second semester of academic year 2015/2016 Industrial Management students will stay in touch with lecturers from local high schools. Whenever there is a need presented by the lecturers, students from Centria University of Applied Sciences are obligated to visit the schools. Meetings can be performed on request from high schools or as an idea of tutors, but these do not have strict timing. All should be discussed and be based on both; demands and possibilities. Parties must remember to discuss the agenda in details beforehand to avoid misunderstandings.

At the very beginning tutors will hear about the project and importance of networking from the author of this thesis, Monika Musielak. As she was in charge, her last task was to prepare the first group for this additional responsibility. Monika's duty is to tell them about the process of project and reasons behind it. Also, she should share the contact list, advise and answer any questions. Next year, the very same group is supposed to prepare new tutors for this task. And so it shall continue.

Events will keep the bond and promote the university among young Finns. These also bring in cultural value. Spreading awareness of people from around the world studying in Ylivieska increases possibility of grouping with Finnish people. Thanks to creating qualitative networks the dream of erasing the line between locals and foreign students could become reality. Tutors of Centria University of Applied Sciences should keep that in mind and introduce best possible performance.

## **7.2 Contacts**

Tutors involved in the project should cooperate with Virve Antinoja. She is the one, who came up with the idea of such events and has access to promotion gadgets, like Centria ducks or notepads.

As for high schools, one should try to reach Kirsi Jarvenpaa to discuss matters of working with Rahkolan koulu in Ylivieska. William O’Gorman is the representative from Merenojan koulu in Kalajoki. Both can be reached by e-mail (APPENDIX 2)

## **7.3 The meeting and its content**

After setting suitable date tutors should consider its agenda. The process requires consultation with teachers from high schools, as they may have different ideas of using presence of international students at the lectures. Nevertheless, such event should partially promote Centria University of Applied Sciences and the Industrial Management degree.

The tutors must remember about the age and specification of the audience. These are Finnish youngsters. Such receivers can easily get bored. It is why the team should keep the meeting in an informal and clear form. The easier remittance is the better. It will ensure comfort and attention of students. Also, implementing games, quizzes or any form of short breaks is a great way of loosening the atmosphere and catching the focus.

The project must be held in a professional manner. Tutors are going to represent the university outside, to promote it and to strengthen the bonds with partners. The team should present great abilities of communication skills, fluency in English and ease in public speaking. There is no place for being late or offensive. Of course, there are cultural differences, which must be taken into account, but as we are in Finland tutors must adopt to Finnish ethics and rules.

## 8 CONCLUSION

Having a proper network and being a part of something greater is essential in personal as well as professional life. Human beings, supported by close people, can perform a much better outcome than a lone person. Feeling more comfortable, when being coached and having strong backup is natural and understandable. So it works in a business scene. Every organization should possess the kit of essential contacts; durable bonds, links with partners. These keep the company competitive, secure its position on the market and widen opportunities.

In the case of Centria it is especially important. Being the only university in the area forces pressure to firstly catch attention of youngsters and then get them to study a higher degree within its programs. Even an outstanding marketing program would fail without suitable contacts. Good relationship with local high schools makes the recruitment process easier. It creates promotion ground and ensures natural flow of students between educational institutions.

Using the Industrial Management degree program as marketing and networking tool would be beneficial for both parties. International studies are seemingly more colorful and interesting than ordinary ones. Young Finns, once they get to know about the ocean of possibilities coming with the degree, would find studying in English a great checkup after years of grammatical preparation and starting point for intercultural business life. In times of globalization the potential employer would be more likely to hire a young Finn, who already has an international background and has practical language skills. Moreover, merging these two groups would be a helping hand in deleting the line, which divides them despite the numerous grouping attempts.

However, one must remember that creating a network is a continuous process, not a short-term venture. The links have been sketched through the project committed by Industrial Management students, but that is only the beginning. Now it lies in matter of the successors to cherish, what has been designed and set new links. Success can be achieved only by close cooperation between international students and local high schools. Lecturers are now able to use students as cultural support for lessons, real life examples or a hand in holding multicultural events. The form of support is flexible and both parties can come up with ideas of working together.



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Feedback

1. You all were very friendly, kind and with happy face ( these are important things when you are in front of the audience)
2. Your presentations included plenty of interesting information about your studies and working abroad; structure of the presentations was good
3. little games very refreshing and my students liked it very much
4. your english was very good and we could understand everything

- Kirsi Jarvenpaa

The structure of your presentation was very clear and well-organized. It was nice that you all talked about yourselves and your feelings very openly and about the difficulties that you have faced being abroad but also the pros that come with going overseas. So this made the presentation very personal.

The tongue teaser in between was nice (especially for pupils who can't always concentrate long) and it brought a nice atmosphere to the presentation.

You all talked about Centria very positively which is (in my opinion) good because you are at the same time advertising Centria and its studying branches.

Overall it was clear, easy to follow and interesting! :)

- Iida Liisa Repo

Your presentation was generally quite good and the students understood you! However, the students told me that they weren't very interested, when you started talking about Centria and the details of your studies.

- Magda Lintou

Contacts' list

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